NEW BOOKS.

Brief Reviews of Important and Interesting New Publications.

Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy's "Short History of the United States" (Herbert S. Stone & Co.) makes an interesting book. It comprises in 304 pages a story that is calculated to please many Americans and that should be suggestive to anybody. Of course it is an expansion story—a story of tremendous expansion. From Jamestown and Plymouth Rock and the New Netherlands to Porto Rico and Hawaii and the Philippines is a long way. It is a journey calculated to tire the Atkinsonians, who are a static sort, nourished on 13-cent dinners and sustained morally by their overflowing habit of unavailing objection. Mr. McCarthy's conscience permits him to follow the history of the United States with approving enthusiasm. He considers that only four centuries have elapsed since this continent was discovered; that it is less than three centuries since civilization made its beginning hereabouts, and that the United States, now admitted to be of importance in the world, are not much more than one hundred years old. The history of the United States, he boldly declares, cannot be too well known or too deeply studied. He calls this history the record of the greatest effort for freedom, the greatest experiment in democracy ever made by man. Aside from the instruction that is in it, he finds that it contains the fascination of romance. The pages of America's chronicle, he says, are adventurous as an epic, splendid with heroic deeds, crowded with heroic figures. What he writes is calculated to make us feel good, though it is hardly to be doubted that we have anticipated him, and that we already feel that way, according to our habit and our plain provocation. We notice two or three slight errors and inconsistencies. It is said that the French Protestants went to South Carolina in the middle of the sixteenth century, which was rather early. "Major-Gen. André" (page 187) gives a curious impression. On page 169 it is said that Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence "was much altered" when it was submitted to the Congress, and on page 170 it is said that Jefferson's declaration, "after some slight changes," was adopted and duly signed by the Congress. On page 200 it said of Washington that his tastes were "not exactly simple," and on page 204 he is called "so simple." On page 242 we find the expression, "make a try." This is less formal than Gibbon; furthermore, it is more human. On page 302 it is said: "Havana faces New Orleans across the Gulf of Mexico." Of course, Havana, having as many sides as the compass, may be said to face anything. She faces the North Pole and the South Pole, and she faces Mecca across the Atlantic and Africa and the Red Sea. On page 261 it is said that W. J. Bryan is called the "Boy Orator" because of his youthful appearance. This explanation is plainly inadequate. Mr. Bryan looks sufficiently mature. There must be some other reason for calling him juvenile.

It is hard to see, in the story called "The Measure of a Man," by E. Livingston Prescott (R. F. Fenno & Co.), why the hero, an "enlisted man" and an excellent Sergeant, should have prostrated himself before the heroine who is here presented. She was slender and soft-handed, to be sure, with a sufficient independent income to pay her board, and she could come down the stairway noiselessly in the gray of the morning and consort with the dew and the flowers in an appropriate sort of way; but she was amazingly foolish, and her fawnlike manner was no compensation for her deficiencies of soul and mind. The Sergeant ought to have devoted himself to the drill and growled at the squad, and dismissed her valorously from his martial memory. The trouble with him was that he was afflicted with imagination, and that he gave undue importance to matters that he did not understand. He called Miranda his "queen," and he was overlastingly getting down on his knees to her, which must have been a matter of some difficulty if he was braced as tightly as some British Sergeants are. It is a positive pleasure to have her overcome by her cousin, the poet. We hate to say anything against a lady, but she deserved her fate. Her cousin's name was Fulbert, which is so much like Filbert that one has to be careful not to get the wrong impression. The first time she set eyes on him "the throb of her heart robbed her of all power of speech." Not really, because she managed to say a few words, her "large eyes fixed on his with the terror of a trapped bird." His style of conversation would have been wearisome to some. He was a most obvious poet. He called her a virgin lily and a blush rose, and her character is indicated when it is said that she liked it. The Sergeant tried to commit suicide for her. He walked into the sea and shot himself with a pistol. The bullet found an impenetrable obstacle in his skull; it glanced from that formidable structure, and the Sergeant was picked up by philanthropists, who carried him off to a cattle range in South America. Finally, Miranda had the good fortune to be jilted by her cousin, the poet, and the faithful Sergeant was unfortunate enough to come back and secure her. Here is the final scene. The name of the Sergeant was Sadoc Monck:

A wind, wild, yet soft, made the trees shudder and bow, and marshalled a solemnly gorgeous procession of giant clouds, purple and dun-amber, shot with gleams of blinding gold across the pale green, melting into pure cowslip yellow and ineffable rose, of the evening sky. The half light about her was faintly crimson and violet with the war of changing color; sweet, half-earthy odors crept to her nostrils; a bird sang a quivering, halting song of flawed sweetness. Then a great tide of woe, longing swept over her heart, so that she was fain to stand still and gaze upward for help and comfort to the City beyond the gates of the sunset and the mists of death and time. * * * She became aware of an approaching figure, darkly defined against the pale green of the sky. * * * The dying light flamed up, parting the clouds, and streamed far and wide. The advancing figure stopped as if stricken to stone, stood statue-like a second, then with the swoop of an eagle's flight came down upon her. It was her turn to pause with a low, thrilling cry and lifted hands of terror and rapture. For the sea had given up its dead, and Monck stood before her.

"Oh, Sadoc! Sadoc!" she cried with a strange, delirious softness of accent, and all her face as wildly transfigured as the sunlit landscape, "Is this you?"

It was indeed Sadoc Monck, Sergeant, who had come back through the earth odors and the celestial colors to the girl who, having been jilted by her cousin, the garrulous poet, was now feverishly awaiting him. "Her lips clung to his," and that is the end of the story.

"In Cloisters Dim," by Charles Curtz Hahn (Burkley Printing Company, Omaha), is a little book of poems of feeling and delicacy. They seem to tell a story:

One eve I knelt in a Franciscan church,
And one I need not name beside me knelt
And prayed. The twilight cast a sacred gloom
O'er nave and chancel. Sculptured saint, and saint
In painting, shadowy, spirit-like appeared.
Her face alone shone clear and angel-like,
And, looking upward to the one red light
Which burned before the Host, a tender light
In her own face, betokened angel smiles.
The sound of children chanting childhood's hymns
Of praise to Mary, floated down from stalls
Up near the holy place. Two monks in cowls
And girded with the threefold cord, before
The altar knelt in silent prayer. She, too,
Dear one, prayed, silent. Heart told heart she prayed
For me.

O, love, long since in Paradise!
This night I vigil keep and kneel alone
Where once those brothers knelt, O love, lost love!—
As, walking through fair vales of rest with Him
In sacrament adored that eve by us,
Thou lookest down upon a priest in prayer—
Rememb'ring that calm night of peace and love,
Rememb'ring him who loved, and loving, died
To all the world for thee—this night, my saint,
My loved one, pray for him who knelt with thee!

The second poem, entitled "After Many Years," may be accepted as a sequel. We give a part of it:

The peace of God has come to me at last!
At peace, I kneel before the sacred throne.
At peace, at last! Through stormy days I've passed,
But through the storm I've come unto my own.

The sun shines brighter 'gainst the convent walls;
The green of trees is greener in the wood;
The flowers bloom brighter, and it seems as if
Thro' all the world there shines a beam of good.

The joy of peace! the joy of peace! By me,
The seeking one, is found in cloisters dim.
The path I've chosen is apart from men,
And with the angels I now walk with Him.

"At the Mass," "Sweet Peace Is Born," "My Crucifix," "The Chain of Our Sins," and "A Dream of Solitude," are some of the other titles.

Among the many queer forms of writing devised by young Frenchmen to force themselves upon the notice of the public the self-introspective romance is one of the most amusing. M. Maurice Barrès, a young man of talent, who can write excellent French when he chooses to, has done as much as any one to establish the fashion, and has led many younger men, who suddenly discovered how interesting they were to themselves, to rush into print and lay bare their precocious sensations to an admiring world. As they are all very young, their life struggles have usually been limited to the nursery, the home or the schoolroom, and their books are consequently, as a rule, eloquent outbursts, often not grammatical, against the tyranny of parents or of teachers who, in their blindness, have tried to repress the precious instincts of the author's inner self. The self revelations are often very funny, but still oftener painfully dull. It is this form of literature that Mr. Richard Le Gallienne now introduces to English readers in "Young Lives" (John Lane: The Bodley Head), adopting the new insanely childish style that for the moment is vying in London with the cult of what he calls "strange sins." A superior young man, with aspirations to become a poet or at least to achieve literary notoriety of some sort, and with a poor opinion of people who oblige him, is presented to us as his hero by Mr. Le Gallienne. He "had no preference for any particular kind of book. It was an entirely abstract passion for print and paper. To have been the author of the 'Iliad' or of Beeton's 'Book of Household Recipes' would have given him the same exaltation of authorship." The craving to see his name on a title page leads him on. At 19 years of age, having decided that it would be pleasanter to leave home and have rooms of his own, he is overcome with indignation at the tyranny of his father in making the rest of the household arise early in the morning, and tells the author of his days what he thinks of him. It is a respectable middle-class family of Liverpool that is described, but we fancy that

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It makes it none the less acceptable that good is to come from it."

"I still maintain," said Miss Madden, interpolating her words through the task of lighting a cigarette, and contriving for them an effect of drollery which appealed to Thorpe most of all — "I shall always insist, just the same, that crime was his true vocation."

Fac-simile of the last page of the manuscript of Harold Frederic's last novel "THE MARKET-PLACE."

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Good bye .... 120-503.